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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

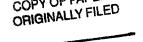
1. A method for sterilizing a container, comprising the steps of:
supplying a disinfectant mist into a container;
heating the container into which the mist has been supplied,
while discharging the mist from the container; and
rinsing an inside of the container after discharge of the mist

therefrom.

- 2. The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the step of preheating the container prior to supply of the mist.
- 10 3. The method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein: the step of preheating the container comprises heating entirety of the container and heating a mouth portion of the container additionally.
 - 4. The method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein: the step of preheating the container comprises heating entirety of the container by a hot blast which is supplied into the container and heating a mouth portion of the container additionally.
 - 5. The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a prescribed leaving time after supplying the disinfectant mist, before starting to discharge the mist from the container.
- 20 6. The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a prescribed standing time after discharging the mist, before starting to rinse the inside of the container.
 - 7. The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein: a hot blast is supplied into the container into which the mist has been supplied so as to carry out the heating of the container and the discharging of the

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- 8. The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein: the step of rinsing the inside of the container comprises supplying a rinsing fluid heated into the container.
- 5 9. An apparatus for sterilizing a container, comprising:
 - a device for supplying a disinfectant mist into a container;
 - a device for heating the container into which the mist has been supplied;
 - a device for discharging the mist from the container; and
- 10 a device for rinsing an inside of the container from which the mist has been discharged.
 - 10. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, further comprising a device for preheating the container prior to supply of the mist.
 - 11. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein: said device for preheating the container compirses a device for heating entirety of the container by a hot blast which is supplied into the container, and a device for heating a mouth portion of the container from an outside thereof.
- 12. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein: said device for 20 rinsing the container comprises a device for supplying a rinsing fluid heated into the container.
 - 13. An apparatus for sterilizing a container, comprising:
 - a device for supplying a disinfectant mist into a container;
 - a device for supplying a hot blast into the container into which the mist has been supplied; and
 - a device for rinsing an inside of the container.

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- 14. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, further comprising a device for preheating the container prior to supply of the mist.
- 15. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 14, wherein: said device for preheating the container comprises a device for heating entirety of the container by a hot blast which is supplied in the container, and a device for heating a mouth portion of the container.
- 16. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein: said device for rinsing the container comprises a device for supplying a rinsing fluid heated into the container.
- 10 17. A method for heat-treating a container comprising the steps of:
 supplying a hot blast into the container through a nozzle
 inserted in the container to heat entirety of thereof;

heating a mouth portion of the container additionally.